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ABSTRACT

After an examination of societal currents leading up to the student revolution of the sixties, the author develops a theoretical concept of needs assessment. Assuming that effective needs assessment and program planning depends on the success of simulating the "needing" process of constituents, he divides community college clientele into two types: the "idiographic" or individual-centered, and the "nomothetic" or societally centered. These types are then explored along behavioral transaction patterns that result from their identified needs states. The interactive or transactional approach is next applied to needs assessment techniques including the task force approach, the Nominal Group Process, the Delphi Technique, the Transactional Evaluation Model, and the Charette. Omnibus and targeted surveys are then examined in relation to general and specialized clientele, including the handicapped, senior citizens, Latins, Blacks, and Native Americans. Finally, a strategic planning model is presented which can facilitate program development for new constituencies. (RT)

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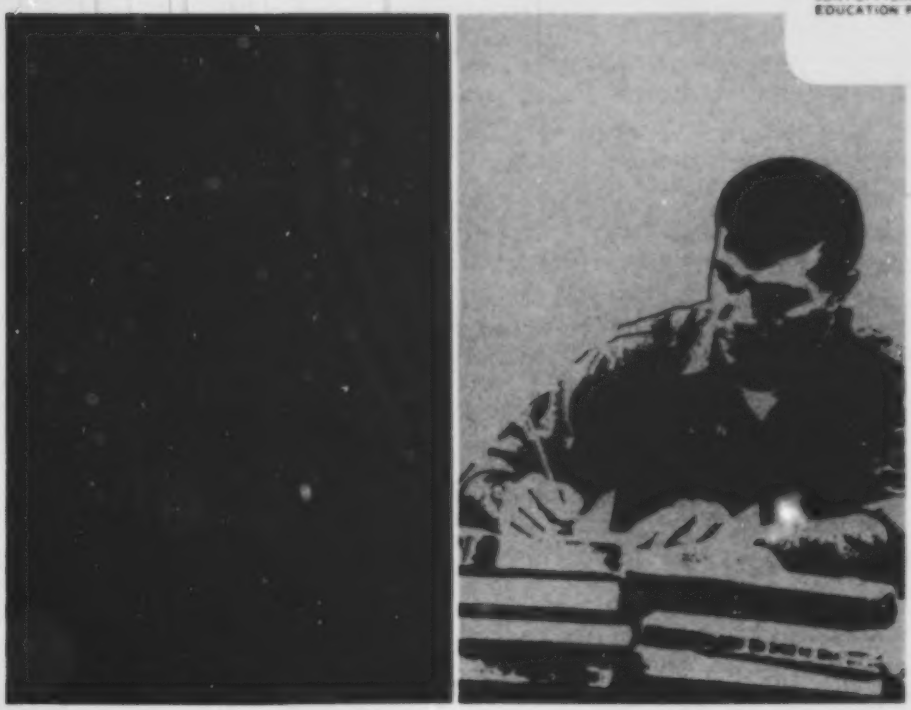

Developing Constituency Programs in Community Colleges

By Max R. Raines

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Developing Constituency Programs in Community Colleges

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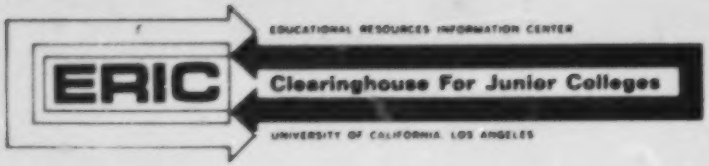

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INTRODUCTION

REVOLUTION AND AFTERMATH

Until the early sixties, the power and prerogatives of higher education were seldom questioned. Colleges and universities were free to prescribe not only what was to be learned and why, but also where, when, and how. With such control they became the "gate keepers," deciding who would be admitted and who graduated. Their right to serve as critics of societal trends was taken for granted; their research capability was lauded, particularly when the products of that research were translated into visible economic, military, and medical benefits. By the mid-sixties they received lavish federal support. Thus, they seemed beholden to no one, almost removed from direct public influence.

During those golden years, the predictable student gripes about regulations, alumni dissatisfactions with the athletic program, and legislative complaints about rising costs were taken for granted and seldom created prolonged difficulty. But college administrators and faculty members failed to recognize that the emerging dissension of the sixties was different from the annual "bitchiness" of students, alumni, and legislators. And only a few short months after the Berkeley Free Speech Movement, universities were besieged with demands, not complaints; destruction of property, not criticism; reduced appropriations, not threats. In reflecting on the student protest movement, Sidney Hook emphasized the linkage between national unrest and student protest:

> As a rule, the protest involved at the outset not the great mass of students but a small group of political activists. It was inspired primarily not by felt deficiencies in student education but by issues that in their origin had nothing to do with campus studies — Vietnam, the draft, poverty, racial injustice, the armaments race, ecological disaster. The success of the student protest movements in demoralizing the campuses of Cornell, Berkeley, Yale, Harvard and Columbia is attributable not to the weight of their reasoned or reasonable demands for a more relevant education, but to faculty and administrative cowardice (1976, p. 61).

It may be true that a firmer hand earlier in the period of unrest might have quelled the rebellion on campus. It is also likely that the larger social problems were more significant in motivating the protests than the complaints about poor teaching, restrictive policies, outmoded regulations, due process, and so on. Nevertheless, these academic issues rallied the troops, just as symptoms more than "real" causes have historically aroused the people to follow their leaders into war. And furthermore, campus demonstrations aroused much deeper feelings in the general populace, who apparently had considerable latent hostility toward the university system. For example disenfranchised groups were easily convinced that higher education had been specifically designed to keep them out. Others blamed campus permissiveness for the upheaval. The call for reform came from all segments of society — liberal and conservative, poor and middle class.

With considerable support from off-campus groups, students obtained several major concessions during the revolution:

(1) greater access for poor students and members of minority groups;
(2) programs that were more relevant to the learners' needs, as they saw them; and
(3) acceptance of college students as adults who have the same right as everyone else to choose their life styles.

Aggrieved taxpayers, alumni, and legislators added two mandates to the list:

(4) increased efficiency and economy in the operation of colleges and universities; and
(5) greater accountability for the quality of the educational programs.

Those of us who were associated with higher education during that period realize that the hostility expressed toward the university system was experienced more as a backwash in community colleges than as a tidal wave. But even the backwash was sufficient to rock the boat. The response of community colleges was to anchor themselves near their local constituencies rather than tie up alongside the beleaguered universities, which were listing badly in the storm of protest. Once these traditional tie-lines were severed, community colleges were freer to endorse egalitarianism and embrace pragmatism. These mandates and concessions have caused community colleges to examine the full implications of their relationships with their constituents. As part of this examination, they are making increasing efforts to find out what their local communities want and need from them.

A RATIONALE FOR ASSESSING NEEDS

Burton Clark showed in his landmark case study, *The Open Door College* (1960), that the stubborn preference for transfer courses among blue-collar students was due more to social-status factors than to the colleges' offerings. These findings were quite significant, but it was his catchy title that captured attention. The term became a cliche almost immediately, probably because it expressed so neatly the struggle to achieve meritocracy in higher education. Supporters of this goal held that every high school graduate (or the equivalent) should have the "right to try" in a college setting. Although meritocracy was widely endorsed among community college administrators, many faculty members resisted it because they felt it was unrealistic in their own classrooms. The social revolution shifted the ground of this debate. Revolutionaries equated elitism and exclusiveness with racism. Those opposed to meritocracy were classified as racist, or at least suspect, if they rejected the open door concept. Consequently, the revolution not only quelled overt resistance to meritocracy but also permitted more liberal staff members to advocate egalitarianism. Again the ground shifted. The debate about who is to enter college was replaced by the debate about who is responsible for the success or failure of the student. Egalitarians maintained that equal opportunity does not exist unless the system assumes greater responsibility for guaranteeing the right to a reasonable chance for success (Moore, 1976). Such a viewpoint has broad ramifications for curriculum development, instructional processes, and assessments of needs.

Today, community colleges appear to be stuck somewhere between meritocracy and egalitarianism. They are shifting to a criterion-referenced and mastery-based model (Roueche, 1976) from a normative model which, as Cross (1971) observes, automatically declares half the people to be subnormal. If a new clientele is to be coached to success, then systematic appraisals of their learning preferences, self-concepts, learning styles, cognitive styles, and aptitudes are essential. In making such assessments, one must turn both to potential students — particularly a variety of adults — and to local businesses and industries to determine which programs are most apt to meet learning and manpower needs. Translating their responses into productive programs in which virtually all students can experience success is the essence of the egalitarian view.

EMERGING PRAGMATISM

The demand for relevance in higher education was also a central theme of the campus revolution. It represents an attack on the prerogatives of the disciplinarians to select material from their disciplines according to their own specialized interests and to grant rights of passage only to those students who are able and willing to learn the material. Resentment toward this view had been festering for a long time. When radicals attacked irrelevance in the classroom, they found more illustrations than they could possibly use. Even the more conservative alumni who might have risen to the defense of the academy often found themselves more in agreement with the radicals than with the defenders on this issue. The plain facts were that most of what people "learned" in college had long since been forgotten. It seldom related to their lives in any meaningful way. Follow-up studies indicated that graduates perceived their extra-curricular activities and their social experiences as the most meaningful part of their college lives. Academicians rationalized this finding by suggesting that it was primarily due to the failure of the admissions process to select scholarly students.

Again community colleges did not bear the brunt of these criticisms, for at least two reasons. First, they were offering a wide variety of career programs which were quite directly related to the job market. Second, they were not held responsible for the content of transfer courses. Most transfer faculty members sought to make their courses as nearly parallel to university courses as possible. In their view, they could hardly be blamed for what a student might perceive as irrelevant content. If the student wanted to succeed at the university, they said, the task was to "learn it" not "question it." We should point out that a small but persistent group of community college faculty members have questioned whether an institution can maintain its integrity when it offers content for which it does not assume full responsibility. From their standpoint, the college's responsibility is to devise courses that are meaningfully related to the lives of the learners. But transfer-oriented faculty members have not been inclined to accept such courses as prerequisites for any of their advanced courses. Even concessions from the nearby senior institutions regarding the transferability of "homemade" general education courses did not suffice, since those transfer credits tended to use up the elective credits a transfer student might have taken at the university.

Again the revolution paved the way for potential modifications. For example, older students from diverse backgrounds with *immediate* needs have affected content and process. "Why should we learn this?" "How will it help me?" they have asked. Those faculty members who have been sufficiently secure not to disregard these "irreverent" questions have found themselves adopting a more pragmatic, student-centered approach which seeks to integrate the major concepts and principles of various disciplines with the actual life experiences of students. This view of education was originally espoused by John Dewey but until recently his ideas had been largely ignored or rejected by postsecondary educators. The current interest has been aroused in part by the mounting evidence that mere acquisition of knowledge (now exploding at an exponential rate) is a losing cause. Four years of hibernated learning in the halls of ivy is not sufficient. Education for today's world must be lifelong and life-centered.

CONSUMER CONSCIOUSNESS

In the years following the campus upheavals and the end of the Vietnam war, college enrollments have barely held their own. Loss of enrollment is particularly embarrassing in a society that typically equates quality with growth. Once the taxpayer and the legislature have accepted expansion as prime evidence of a public institution's worthiness, what can we tell them when enrollments dwindle or the rate of growth slows dramatically? The decline has been accompanied by a more intense scrutiny of college budgets by an output-conscious legislature, which has latched on to credit-hour production as the primary basis for distributing funds. Credit-hour "control" has served well to express legislative disdain for those professors whose avoidance of classroom involvement can be measured by the credit hour.

In this context it is not surprising that colleges are adopting modern management techniques for controlling or increasing production (credit hours) and attracting new "markets." The management emphasis and consumer consciousness have also brought a new emphasis on assessing needs of consumers. By meeting their needs administrators hope to generate additional revenues.

With rising expectations and dwindling resources in most communities, the financial state of higher education does not look favorable in the years ahead. That can be documented. What can't be documented so readily, but is even more distressing, is the residual mood of the revolution. Most citizens seem to care

little about the current plight of higher education. And the awareness by college staffs that "they don't love us anymore" has a depressing effect. Now it is apparent that economic inefficiencies and ineffective management will no longer be tolerated by state legislatures.

The current lack of support for higher education among legislators and taxpayers makes the findings of Cartter and Solmon even more sobering:

> Between 1980 and 1994 . . . there will be a 25 percent decline in the traditional college-age group. Barring other student clienteles, this decline could mean a drop in full-time-equivalent enrollments of 1.8 million students during the period in question, resulting in a reduction in total faculty size of 100,000 (1976, p. 37).

Although the authors are speaking of all of higher education, their point has serious implications for community colleges because, as they note, "it takes four to six part-time adult students to replace one full-time undergraduate" (1976, p. 38).

It is not surprising, then, that many community colleges are embracing both the marketing concepts and the planning strategies of the industrial community in their struggle for survival. Suddenly we are speaking of students as *consumers* of our *product* (education), which if *packaged* well and successfully *marketed* will yield additional *revenues* for development, providing of course that production *workers* (faculty members) don't strike against *management* (the board and administrators). Although "members of the academy" may decry the emergence of the marketing model for community colleges, it is likely to remain with us. Our colleges will conduct consumer surveys and manpower studies as a way of developing new markets and fostering continuing support among the consumers (students, taxpayers, and college employees). Thus, the skills needed to make these assessments are at a premium in the marketing context.

Planning technologies are also a part of the effort to achieve managerial efficiency. The era of frontier expansionism in the community colleges is over; further growth will be controlled and systematized at state levels. So our free enterprise talents will now have to be applied to developing new markets, rather than responding to the great demand of the sixties.

An important element in planning is the assessment of needs, which will be fully tested in community colleges in the

years ahead. Its success is not guaranteed, because, as we shall see in this monograph, the whole concept of need is elusive, and current assessment instruments are not very sophisticated. For these reasons, the needs assessment today provides justification for past decisions more than it affects planning. And the process of translating needs into educational programs will probably remain more of an art than a science.

CONSTITUENCY DEVELOPMENT

Perhaps the most significant outcome of the social revolution for community colleges has been the discovery of the college by an increasing variety of constituent groups. Although members of ethnic minorities, women, handicapped persons, and senior citizens had attended the college in the years preceding the revolution, their numbers were not sufficient to give them much power or identity as groups. The revolution hastened the development of their group consciousness, spurred their enrollment, and gave them the courage to assert their needs with the expectation that the colleges would respond. Now that the supply of students in the traditional age group is dwindling, most community colleges have recognized that their future may well depend on cultivating these constituencies. Consequently, assessments of their needs become especially important in building and updating programs designed for them. Their expectations are high, but the community colleges are realizing that if they meet those expectations, they will establish an impressive support base — particularly in the state legislatures.

A community college constituency, as we use the term here, consists of a cluster of persons (1) with a sense of group identity based on common needs, problems, aspirations, and life styles and (2) with educational needs that are related partially, if not entirely, to their identity with the constituent group. Conceptualization of community college constituencies can emerge from a variety of variables: age, sex, education, employment, socio-economic level, ethnic identity, or some combination of these and other characteristics. There is no ideal basis for classification. I have found that an effort to cluster people according to *probable* levels of transactional performance may be useful. In this regard I have defined three transacting levels as follows:

1. *Survival Level.* That level of transacting which occurs at an elementary maintenance level with virtually all energy directed at providing physiological needs (Maslow, 1970).

2. *Maintenance Level.* That level of transacting in which most physical and psychic energy is devoted to meeting the day-to-day commitments mandated in essential life roles (worker, consumer, family member). Associated with Maslow's security needs and love needs.
3. *Expressive Level.* That level of transacting in which the individual has the time, energy, and capacity to transcend immediate requirements of living and to discover deeper meaning in the activities of life. Associated with Maslow's esteem needs and actualization needs.

Applying these levels of transaction one might identify the following constitutent groups:

Survival Level	**Maintenance Level**	**Expressive Level**
Migrant workers	Working mothers	Professional persons
Welfare recipients	Hourly workers	Executives
ADC mothers	Semi-skilled workers	Executives' wives
Unskilled laborers	Union members	
High school dropouts	Small business persons	
	Housewives	

It is apparent that some members of various groups may be functioning at levels other than the one to which they are assigned. It is also apparent that an artist with insufficient funds may be functioning at all three levels. Nevertheless the concept of transactional performance appears useful. Community colleges that wish to establish constituency programs must first determine which constituencies they are able and willing to serve.

While a conceptual basis for defining constituencies may be useful for those of us who write monographs, the practitioners in the field typically find themselves responding to those constituencies which persist in seeking assistance. Some of the constituent groups to which community colleges are currently responding include the following: reentry women, ethnic minorities, senior citizens, handicapped, Vietnam veterans, government officials, prisoners, civic leaders, union leaders, professional groups, and so on.

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Educators have commonly assumed that if one assesses the "real" needs of a group of individuals and translates those needs into an educational program, success is almost guaranteed. This view is undoubtedly reinforced by the success of business and industry in applying motivational theories. For instance, we know what

Madison Avenue has accomplished by manipulating the human need structure: by inducing us to associate a particular product with our recurring needs, advertisers condition us to purchase various products. Although most of us decry the constant onslaught of slick advertising, its success is awesome. Even though we may reject the purposes for which "manipulative technologies" are employed, we are intrigued by the potential contribution to the development of educational programs. The current emphasis on needs assessment is evidence of our growing interest. With declining student enrollments, this interest is likely to intensify.

In clarifying the concept of needs for use in an educational context, we have found it useful to differentiate between the idiographic view and the nomothetic view. Getzels and Thelen (1972) have stressed the importance of conceptualizing the idiographic and nomothetic dimensions of any social system. Since their work is well known, it will not be elaborated here. Instead I will extend their concepts into the arena of needs assessment (Figure 1).

The word *idiograph* literally means "written in one's own hand." So the idiographic viewpoint is derived from all that makes us individuals: our needs, values, attitudes, aptitudes, physical nature, interactive style, etc. Each of us is a unique combination of these qualities. The way we perform each transactional role bears our own unique "trademark," though it may not always be visible. Therefore, when educational planners assess needs from an idiographic standpoint, they are seeking to look at the world through the eyes of the individual and then derive educational implications.

The word *nomothetic* denotes lawgiving or the science of laws, and since laws govern human interaction, one who has a nomothetic view is looking at life through "societal lenses." This perspective is focused on the human and material resources required to maintain society, the structure and function of subsystems, the roles and tasks which must be performed to preserve and enhance the social system, the training and education people must receive to perform these tasks, the interrelationships that are necessary among the subsystems to give the larger system essential cohesiveness, the barriers to the desired level of functioning within the social system, and so on. Therefore, the term nomothetic denotes established patterns of implicit and explicit expectations within society. Persons who have this view are typically concerned with "what ought to be." Thus, they are sometimes seen as opponents of individuality, or as defenders of the status

Figure 1. A Conceptual Framework for Needs Assessment

ECONOMIC • POLITICAL • GOVERNMENTAL • RELIGIOUS • EDUCATIONAL • SOCIAL • PROFESSIONAL • LEGAL VIEWS
BUSINESS • ASSOCIATION • CLUB • INSTITUTION • CHURCH • SCHOOL • AGENCY • CONSTITUENCY • COURTS • PRISONS
SUPERVISOR•COLLEAGUE•TEACHER•COUNSELOR•OFFICIAL•DOCTOR•LAWYER•TECHNICIAN•MERCHANT•JUDGE
WORKER • LEARNER • CITIZEN • FAMILY MEMBER • CULTURE BEARER • CONSUMER
PHYSICAL•EMOTIONAL•SPIRITUAL•SOCIAL•INTELLECTUAL
VALUES•ATTITUDES•BELIEFS•EXPERIENCE
SECURITY • STIMULATION
BASIC NEEDS
IDENTITY
OUR IDIOGRAPHIC NATURE
NOMOTHETIC EXPECTATIONS
NOMOTHETIC EXPECTATIONS
TRANSACTIONAL ROLES
AGENTS OF SERVICE & SOCIALIZATION
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE
COMMUNITY VALUES, BELIEFS, CUSTOMS & MORES

quo, and are frequently called "the establishment."

In a real sense the social revolution of the sixties was a clash between those with an idiographic perspective and those with a nomothetic view. In the fifties the "organization man" depicted by Whyte (1957) was preoccupied with fitting into the structure and trying not to draw undue attention to his own idiosyncrasies. The corporate image was supreme and was personified by the man in a grey flannel suit, holding his black briefcase in one hand and the hand strap of a subway or commuter train in the other, with a *Wall Street Journal* tucked under his arm. In all ways he became the classic "nomothete."

With the sixties came the militants and the hippies, who revolted against the establishment by extolling the rights and virtues of the individual. By means of dress, words, and habits they sought to glorify, not nullify, the idiosyncrasies of the individual. Reich (1971) saw in this behavior the birth of a new consciousness that would become the "greening of America." Roszak (1969) described it as a counterculture movement. These were indeed the days of the "idiograph."

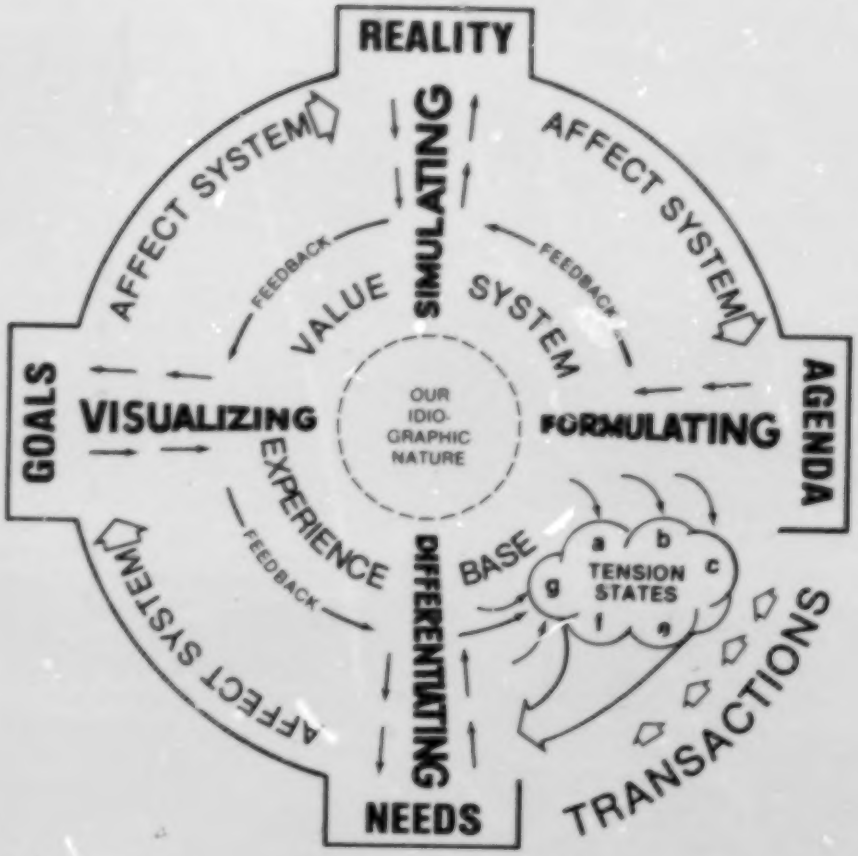
Our cultural vacillation between the two ways of looking at things makes it apparent that both are needed. The idiographic view is derived from the restless desire for individual expression and change, while the nomothetic attitude exists because humans need security and stability within the community. Consequently a comprehensive needs assessment must take into account both personal and social requirements. On the one hand, we are trying to simulate the needing process of individuals so that we may offer them the kinds of educational experience that will not only appeal to them but will further their development as individuals. On the other hand, we are trying to simulate the expectations and potentialities of the social systems which influence or govern our lives and to diagnose the implications for educational programming. Figure 1 is designed to illustrate the nature of this dynamic process. It highlights the importance of transactional responses in accommodating idiographic needs within the context of nomothetic expectations. The capacity of an educational system to strengthen those transactional responses is a measure of its effectiveness. As educational planners, our failure to simulate idiographic needs or nomothetic expectations with reasonable accuracy seriously limits our capacity to strengthen transactional competencies.

CHAPTER 1
SIMULATING IDIOGRAPHIC NEEDS

A basic assumption of this monograph is that effective needs assessment and program planning depends in large measure on our success in simulating the needing processes of the constituent members we wish to serve. I use the term needing process to denote the complex interaction of many interrelated elements and processes in our psycho-physical nature. More specifically I see the needing process as encompassing (1) our tension states which arouse us; (2) our differentiation of the states into need awareness; (3) our visualization of a desired state of affairs (goal states) which would fulfill or resolve the tension state; (4) our value system which judges the desirability of alternative choices; (5) our affective responses which reinforce, divert, or block the flow of motivational energy; (6) the projection of our sense of reality, based on our prior experiences; and (7) the formulation of an agenda for action which leads us into behavioral transactions with our environment (Figure 2).

If we are to simulate the needing process of constituent groups we can enhance our accuracy through systematic and well-designed encounters with representative members of the constituency. Such encounters allow us to determine the common elements and processes in their needing processes and to gain insight into the modal patterns by which constituent members define and integrate their own needing processes. As educational planners our primary concern is not only to ascertain the nature of their learning agenda but also to understand how those agenda relate to the personal needs, goals, values and aspirations of clients. The more we can understand how their learning agenda are related to the rest of their lives, the more we can create conditions favorable to fulfillment of their agenda. Community college classrooms are filled with diverse students who are sharing the same teacher, subject matter and methodology, but for whom the learning experiences have vastly different meanings. Awareness of those meanings enable us to develop support systems that will enhance learning considerably. For example: a reentry woman may be enrolled in a chemistry course with a view of becoming a lab technician. Her responsiveness to that learning situation may be dynamically related to a conflict about her "right" to be a student while being a mother and a wife. If comments from her husband and children aggravate her internal

Figure 2. The Needing Process



conflict, her learning in the chemistry class may be effected negatively. Opportunities to think through her views with other reentry women or with qualified staff members can help her decide how to handle the situation.

To illustrate the nature of the needing process as it might affect a potential reentry woman I have constructed a vignette which reflects the motivation and conflicts of such a person (Figure 3). While this account is fictitious it is drawn from previous encounters with reentry women and staff members while conducting an appraisal of the New York State Guidance Center over a nine-month period (Raines, 1969).

Figure 3. Jane — A Reentry Woman

Jane is riding home from a bridge party. George, her husband, is describing in detail how he made a grand slam by pulling off a tricky finesse. Jane is not listening. Instead, she is reflecting on the discussion at dessert.

(Several of the men were giving forth with their best "Severeid pronouncements" on why Ford lost the election. JANE WANTED TO ADD HER VIEW. The other women were quiet; in fact, most of them seemed quite bored. HER URGE TO SPEAK BECAME INTENSE. Just as she cleared her throat all eyes turned in her direction — at least it felt that way. A quick image of mother flashed through her mind. Jane had been repeatedly warned that "IT IS BETTER TO BE QUIET AND BE LOVED." INSTEAD OF EXPRESSING HER VIEW, Jane flushed, then quickly recovered by SUGGESTING THAT IT WAS GETTING LATE AND TIME TO GO.)

Now, as she and George continue across town she interrupts his chatter. HER HEAD IS THROBBING. SHE NEEDS AN ASPIRIN. SHE ASKS

Episode 1

1. Tension State
1a. Need for Self-Expression
1b. Tension State
1c. Value Judgement
1d. Need for Security
1e. Behavioral Transaction

Episode 2

2. Tension State
2a. Need to Relieve Pain

2b. Behavioral Transaction ..... *GEORGE TO STOP at the next available store. Soon he pulls in at an all-night grocery. Jane indicates that she'll go in so she can get some water for the aspirin. While the disgruntled*

2c. Behavioral Transaction ..... *CLERK IS SEARCHING FOR A PAPER CUP in the stockroom, JANE*

Episode 3

3. New Tension State ..... *NOTICES A BROCHURE near the*

3a. Need for Identity and Goal Visualization ..... *cash register. It pictures a WOMAN OUTFITTED IN A LAB COAT talking to another technician. She notes that it is published by the Women's Center at the local college. The clerk returns; she thanks him for the cup of water, then swallows the aspirin.*

2d. Transaction Complete ..... *As SHE PAYS FOR THE BOTTLE OF ASPIRIN, she asks the clerk if*

3b. Agenda Formulation ..... *SHE MIGHT HAVE ONE OF THE BROCHURES. He makes a sound which she assumes is a yes.*

Jane returns to the car. George asks

3c. Behavioral Transaction ..... *if she is O.K. She nods BUT SAYS SHE WANTS TO CLOSE HER EYES AND REST. As the car speeds along the freeway, she wonders what it would be like to go back to college.*

3d. Affective Reinforcement ..... *The THOUGHT BRINGS A RUSH OF EXCITEMENT in the pit of her*

3e. Goal Visualization ..... *stomach. Images of WALKING ACROSS CAMPUS, GOING TO CLASS, WORKING IN A LAB, GRADUATING IN A CAP AND GOWN flash through her mind.*

The next day after the kids are off to school and George is on his way to

3f. Reality Simulation ..... *work, JANE READS THE BROCHURE SEVERAL TIMES. It answers some of her questions but mostly it encourages her to make use of the Women's Center. At this point she*

3g. Tension State ..... *FEELS A SUDDEN UNEASINESS.*

3h. Reality Simulation ..... *HOW WILL GEORGE AND THE KIDS REACT? WHAT WILL HER MOTHER SAY?*

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3i. Behavioral Transaction ..... *Later in the morning SHE CALLS AN ACQUAINTANCE whom she has heard is attending the college.*

3j. Affective Reinforcement ..... *The conversation IS HELPFUL AND MOST REASSURING. Her friend reinforces the importance of using the Women's Center, particularly the Wednesday afternoon seminars.*

3k. Behavior Transactions with Affective Reinforcement ..... *Jane VISITS THE CENTER and is much ENCOURAGED BY THE COUNSELOR'S RESPONSE. Two days later she attends the afternoon seminar where she gains additional information, shares some of HER DOUBTS ABOUT HAVING THE ABILITY to do college work after such a long "vacation" from studying. Most of all she feels comfortable with the other women in the seminar except one who already seems to have all the answers.*

3l. Value/Self-concept (Doubt) .....

3m. Reality Simulation ..... *As she drives home she is both excited and uneasy. HOW WILL SHE BREAK THE NEWS? What will George think? How will the kids respond? Will her friends approve? What will Mom say? SOMEHOW SHE KNOWS SHE WILL DO IT. IT FEELS RIGHT!*

3n. Affective Reinforcement .....

There are three related and sometimes overlapping episodes in the vignette. The first episode concerns Jane's anxiety about expressing her viewpoints in a mixed social group. The second concerns her need to relieve the tension created by her ambivalence. And the third episode reflects her readiness to find a solution that might give her more confidence in her social transactions. While this fictitious account reflects her unique problems it is quite apparent that her experience is common to many women who suffer from lack of confidence, yet want to do something about it. This vignette is designed to illustrate the dynamics of the needing process.

Now let us turn our attention to the specific elements and dynamics in the needing process and their ramifications for assess-

ing idiographic needs. Returning to Figure 2 we note that there are four stages in the needing process after the tension state is aroused: (1) need differentiation, (2) goal visualization, (3) reality simulation and (4) agenda formulation. Throughout these stages there is a continuing reference to the core of our personality which contains our value system (beliefs, values, and self-concept), our prior experience, and our own idiographic nature. Thoughts and impressions pass through the stages and are referred to "operation central" for interpretation and judgment. All of this processing takes place within the context of the affect system which reinforces our movement toward expression, or diverts our energy to competing needs, or causes us to repress our needs.

Figure 2 suggests that the needing process moves through successive stages in a linear fashion from an aroused tension state to behavioral transaction. While this is often the case there are many instances when our affective response causes us to skip one or more stages. In other instances two stages may become so intertwined that we cannot tell which is functioning. These stages in the needing process are essentially *moments of cognition* which allow us to make conscious adjustments in the needing process. Our capacity to make such adjustments is what keeps us from becoming automatons. As we have seen in the illustration of Jane, the needing process is always launched by a tension state.

TENSION STATES

Tension states are caused by internal or external stimuli. Our physical being is in a constant state of change and thus produces an unending barrage of stimuli. Thirst, hunger, elimination, rest, exercise, and all of the attendant physiological changes account for a large share of the internal stimuli. Because these needs recur daily (even hourly), they are processed with a minimum of attention or psychic energy. Other internal stimuli associated with our thought processes produce many additional tension states. We are constantly perceiving and interpreting the meaning or significance of various stimuli, both internal and external. From a phenomenological point of view, our perceptions of reality provide us with the only reality we can know. Consequently, an external stimulus which produces an intense tension state for one person may hardly be noticed by another person. The highly individualized nature of the perceptual process makes our efforts to infer needs exceedingly difficult.

Tension states arouse the needing process and give the

initial momentum to it. But not all tension states are dealt with by the individual. Sometimes they pass into the background because more important tension states have come to the fore. We can deliberately decide not to attend to a particular tension state, but more often than not we are unaware of such a decision because our attention has moved on to other stimuli. *Tension states may be either pleasant or unpleasant.* If, for example, we know that we will be eating soon and we catch the delicate aroma of a well-prepared meal, our hunger tension may be a state of anticipation that is most pleasant. If no food is in sight and we don't know when or if we will be eating, such an aroma can produce an intense and unpleasant tension state that in time will override almost any other stimuli or tension state.

We process many needs simultaneously and at many levels of awareness. Some needs occur several times a day and are processed with virtually no thought energy, as in the case of our anatomic functions. Other needs demand our awareness periodically but are easily processed because they are familiar to us and we have a routine way of processing them. But tension states arising from unique and unexpected situations require much thought and emotional energy in the needing process. It is not surprising, then, that we learn to rely on routines or stereotypes or roles as a way of saving energy. To deal with each situation as a novelty would deplete our psychic and physical energy quite rapidly.

The diagram of the needing process (Figure 2) also depicts the function of our affective responses which serve as the impelling force in motivation. According to Tomkins (1962), feelings are the real motivating force in the needing process. He maintains that in situations where emotion is highly intensified, as in extreme fear or anger, the needing process becomes a drive that pushes us to immediate action with little or no processing. By the same token, if the emotion or affect aroused by the tension state is insufficient, it will receive no further attention. The central role of the affect system in the needing process has great ramifications for needs assessment. It explains why our assessments sometimes do not produce the anticipated responses from the clients we survey. The respondents may "play our game" by indicating their learning preferences for us, but if they have little emotional identity with those preferences, the subsequent response to our educational programming is often disappointing. (I will deal with this problem in later discussions of assessment strategies.)

Also central to the needing process are values, beliefs, and experience. At each stage (or potential point of cognition) we check our impressions with our experience, beliefs, and values. This checking allows us to validate the cognitive and conative aspects of our nature. Thus we select responses that are perceived as logical within the framework of our experiences and harmonious with our values and beliefs. The complexities of these choices often cause intrapsychic conflicts that prevent optimal integration of reason, emotion, and value. Such conflicts are the source of much stress and often create additional tension states.

Let us turn our attention now to the four stages in the needing process.

NEED DIFFERENTIATION

Concept. As the needing process is aroused by a tension state it requires some differentiation. According to Maslow (1970), we distinguish among physical needs, safety needs, love needs, esteem needs, and expressive or actualizing needs. He maintained that these needs are arranged in a hierarchy: the more basic the need, the more it takes precedence over a less fundamental need. While we tend to label our physical needs directly and without much hestiation (I need to eat, I want a drink, I need some exercise), we are less direct and open in labeling our emotionally-based needs. As we passed through the stages of childhood and adolescence, we received many messages which discouraged expression or even awareness of our emotional needs. Such messages over a prolonged period of time lead us to deny and eventually disown some of our needs. Only when we are in a situation of considerable security and encouragement are we comfortable in acknowledging our needs (e.g., a need to cry, or curse, or touch, or to be free). One of the major reasons for employing a constituency approach is that the very process of sharing similar life experiences and views among constituent members can provide the stimulation and motivation to clarify and express needs. Some of these needs are directly related to reentry into college (gaining independence, making friends, feeling adequate, being more assertive, and so on).

Application. For the sake of illustration we will assume that an "advisory group" representing potential reentry women in the community has agreed to assist the college in exploring the possibility of a women's program. These women have agreed to serve for several months, meeting several times to assist

educational planners at the college in assessing the needs of re-entry women. Later they will engage in transactive planning with a group of agency personnel from the community as well as college staff members and administrators.

Let's assume that in their first meeting the advisory group might be invited to generate a list of personal concerns or problems (needs by implication) which they have observed among other members of their "constituency." By directing attention away from themselves personally and yet keeping attention on people living in circumstances similar to their own, the planner can learn of significant social-emotional-physical needs and problems common to the group. (The Nominal Group Process defined on page 36 is useful for that purpose). During the first evening the group can identify and prioritize the problems and concerns which members of the constituency experience most frequently and with the greatest intensity. Between the close of this meeting and the next one the educational planners can prepare a summary of the group's deliberations and distribute it to the members. This sets the stage for visualization of possible solutions (goals).

GOAL VISUALIZATION

Concept. The major difference between the need stage and the goal stage is the degree of specificity of the perceived solution or resolution of the need. Feelings give *momentum* to a need while goals provide *direction* for the energy flow. A need becomes a goal when it has been translated into a visual image of a desired solution or state of affairs. The use of images is important in goal formulation because it allows us to project possible solutions on the "screen of the mind" before risking any commitment. From our storehouse of impressions and experiences we search for the figures (images) that will compose our projection of desired solutions. As these combined images or configurations are projected on the mental screen, we make judgments about their usefulness and their acceptability. At this point we draw not only on our own pragmatic experiences but also on the values we have internalized. This judgment is a way of increasing the probability that our eventual solution will not cause discomfort. Again it is essential to recognize the importance of the affect system in carrying the image forward. If the image is vague or too fraught with contradictions, it will create new tension states which must be resolved before we can proceed further. It is at the point of "image-ing" that ambivalence and polarities

can be particularly distressing. In an ambivalent state it is difficult to form clear images, and this fuzziness, of course, is detrimental to subsequent stages in the needing process. In short, if we are confused about what we want, we have trouble arriving at an acceptable solution.

Application. After a review of the prioritized problems, needs and concerns generated in the first meeting, the advisory group (at the second meeting) can be invited to exchange ideas about desired situations which they feel might best accommodate some of the more critical needs. Fantasy plays an important part in goal formulation. It has been useful in some situations to encourage participants to close their eyes and visualize one or more situations which might satisfy some of the more important needs identified by the group. After a sufficient period the larger group can be divided into groups of four or five and encouraged to share some of their visualized goals. Members of each group can be asked to write down brief descriptions of the goals described by individuals so that the planner might identify the range, nature, and commonalities among the goals prior to the third meeting. This process is essentially a brainstorming situation with the theme "I can dream, can't I?" Participants need to understand that reality simulation will occur at the third meeting.

REALITY SIMULATIONS

Concept. At some point in the needing process it is important to project our sense of reality into the process. For some people the need to do this emerges early and becomes quite intense. Those who have participated in the brainstorming sessions will recall how quickly some members of the group wish to intervene in the free flow of ideas to point out which ones are unrealistic. While the eventual necessity of acknowledging and delineating constraints is vital to the formulation of a workable plan or agenda, we know that potential creativeness can be stifled if constraints are brought forth too early and too persistently. Most of us have encountered people whose initial reaction to any idea is doubtful or negative. While such responses often curtail spontaneity there is a time in the needing process when reality simulation is necessary if not essential in formulating effective plans individually or in groups. The most appropriate time for reality simulation comes after possible ideas or goals for meeting individual or group needs have been fully explored.

Simulation of reality, just as formulation of goals, depends on our capacity to project a future situation. It draws on our

imaginative capacities as well as our awareness of practical realities and helps us avoid pitfalls in our later transactions. Because this step in the needing process is reality oriented, our prior experience with similar situations becomes very important. While our visualization of goals is often idealistic and therefore strongly linked to our cherished values and dreams, our simulation of reality is highly pragmatic and strongly related to our concrete experience. Ideally the simulation process becomes a modifier of our needs and goals, thus setting the stage for agenda formulation that will be both promising and realistic.

Application. In the third meeting of the constituency advisory group it is helpful to review the identified needs and the visualized goals. The group is usually quite pleased to see a typed summary of its ideas from the previous meetings. After reviewing and elaborating key points group members can then be asked to think of the resources which would be required to carry out the ideas as well as the important barriers to realization of the goals. Again silent generation of these ideas individually followed by round robin sharing works effectively. The barriers identified can be expected to include such things as lack of money, child care restrictions, transportation, uninterested officials, communication problems, and so on. These are realities. At the same time the group can be encouraged to identify positive resources which might be recognized in helping them implement their goals. With this simulation of reality the group should be ready to formulate an agenda for action.

AGENDA FORMULATION

Concept. In the selection of means (subgoals or objectives) to implement the larger goals, we rely heavily on previous experience. When we are developing our agenda, external events which run counter to our goals tend to cause conflict. Our agenda exist at many levels of awareness, and we will have many agenda at a given time. Sometimes our emotional attraction to a desired experience is sufficiently intense that it will contradict our values. In such cases we may have trouble "owning" our agenda because to do so would be an open denial of our values. Consequently, we are apt to restate our goal to make it apparent that "our motives are pure." If our goals have already been approved by our value system, we are freer to be pragmatic in formulating the means to those ends. Of course, if we carry the pragmatism too far, we risk contradicting our values, but by the same token if we remain too idealistic in formulating our

agenda, we risk not achieving the goal. The issue of means versus ends plagues us all of our lives and usually creates additional tension states.

I have used the concept of agenda because it denotes formation of a plan of action. As individuals some of our agenda will be very loosely conceived, some will be highly organized, some will be explicit and some will be implicit. In any event an agenda is the prelude to behavioral transactions. Agenda condition our response to the transactive situation. If there is an urgency to transact it is not unusual for us to arrive at agenda which may not satisfy our needs and goals, or may be out of tune with our values, or may ignore the realities of the situation. In educational planning with constituent groups we need therefore to make ourselves consciously aware of each of these stages in the needing process.

Application. When moving toward the formation of an agenda with a constituent advisory group we must recognize a potential hazard. After three meetings the group will most likely have an emotional investment in its ideas; consequently, the educational planners must make the group aware of the hazards of "freezing" their agenda before they have transacted with college administrators and representatives of community organizations that are closely related to the constituency. They must also recognize the potential separation which their planning experience has created between them and constituent members who have not participated in the planning process. One way to offset the "let's have it now" feeling is to encourage a *verification survey* to determine the extent to which the larger constituency supports the conclusions of the advisory group. This process, elaborated on later in the monograph, suggests a method through which transactive planning can bring together the idiographic views of constituents and the nomothetic views of the "establishment."

BEHAVIORAL TRANSACTIONS

Concept. Having constructed an agenda which is related to our needs, goals, and sense of reality and which is at least partially in harmony with our values and experience, we then engage in behavioral transactions with our environment. The term transaction is used to denote that our interaction with our environment is not a simple stimulus-response encounter but rather a complex phenomena through which our needing process is expressed. We

read special meanings into each situation based on the current status of our needing process. In an earlier writing I have illustrated the transactional process as follows:

> Let's assume for instance that a group of senior citizens is having difficulty with dealing with inflation on a fixed income. Let's further assume that this difficulty is most acutely experienced at the supermarket. If you were to send five different senior citizens to a supermarket with thirty dollars, you would find much difference in the contents of their baskets at the cashier's counter. The quality and quantity of goods would vary considerably. Also, the aesthetic appeal of their choices would vary. In the filling of the basket, they have gone through a transactional process. To the store they have taken their long-term values about what is "good food"; they have taken their relative levels of trust in television commercials and personalities; they have taken their physical characteristics and peculiar appetites; they have taken their varying capacities to use arithmetic to assess quantity. For some of them, shopping is a burden, for others, it is a social opportunity, for still others, it is a bitter experience at not having sufficient resources to buy the food they were once accustomed to (Raines, 1974, pp. 19, 20).

This brief vignette illustrates a phenomena that is apparent every day of our lives. What appears on the surface to be the same or a similar situation in life for a cluster of people is really quite a different experience. The reality of this difference has difficulty in penetrating our thinking because we are so caught up in the "reality" of our own perceptions. Consequently communication suffers, and we experience the world from different "premises."

Although we are unique individuals, we are more alike than we are different. If this were not so communication would be quite limited. In education it is important that we search for those commonalities without ignoring the differences. That is why transactive planning is so important. In transactive planning we are able to establish the commonalities while acknowledging the differences. For example, the teacher who engages periodically in transactive planning in the classroom is able to adjust the content and the methods to accommodate the learning styles and

abilities within the group. The same advantage exists in program planning. If we engage the target group in transactive planning we are much more likely to simulate their needing processes and therefore build an effective program.

Application. If we are to build an effective program with our group of reentry women we must not only engage them in a process of transactive planning, we should also engage others who have important inputs for the planning process. Within the community there are groups concerned about the needs and development of women. Some of the groups would include social and family agencies, employment offices, churches, and businesses. In addition, members of the college staff will be interested if a proposed program is to use college resources. Consequently, the advisory group needs to engage representatives of these groups in the planning process. They will raise questions that must be answered. The danger at this point is that their questions will arouse excessive defensiveness within the advisory group. The educational planners must spend time preparing both groups for the encounter. One possibility is to discuss the situation with the advisory group during the last half of their third meeting and then to invite the agency representatives to a briefing just prior to the transactive planning meeting. At the briefing the nature of the advisory group's deliberations can be discussed and a supportive emotional climate can be established. While an effort to establish good communication is important it does not mean that honest differences in judgment are not acceptable. That should be affirmed.

At the transactive planning meeting the agenda of the advisory group might be presented in the form of an interview schedule or survey instrument designed to assess needs of the constituency at large. This focus allows agency and college representatives to make suggestions for additional items. The fact that the ideas are to be submitted to a larger sample of the constituency for verification reduces some of the pressure regarding decisions at this first joint planning session.

Members of the advisory group may be willing to serve as interviewers for the verification survey. If so they will need an extra training session and can practice interviewing one another. Such a plan not only provides essential training, but also a needed pilot experience with the instrument.

The remainder of this monograph deals with nomothetic assessments as well as transactive methods of assessment. Culmination of the ideas offered are to be found in a transactive planning model on page 54.

The ultimate purpose of constituency programming at community colleges is to enhance the learning opportunities and conditions for members of the constituency. There is little doubt that we are fast becoming a learning society. No where in the literature has this been documented more than in the work of Allen Tough (1971). For the past ten years Tough has studied the learning projects of adults from all walks of life. His account is reviewed briefly here because it speaks so directly to idiographic assessment of learning needs.

ASSESSING THE LEARNING AGENDA OF ADULTS

In his classic study of adult learning needs, Allen Tough (1971) and a team of trained interviewers gathered data on the natural learning projects of adults. He reasoned that if we knew more about the nature, extent, and motivation of such projects, we would have valuable cues and clues to providing assistance to adults.

He carefully sampled several populations, which included blue-collar factory workers, municipal politicians, elementary school teachers, lower-middle-class adults, upper-middle-class women with preschool children, and social science professors. Tough found that virtually all adults in his sample had undertaken at least one or two major learning efforts per year and some had launched fifteen to twenty projects. He defined a learning project as a major, deliberate effort to gain certain skill and knowledge. He found that it is not uncommon for a man or woman to spend 700 hours a year at learning projects. About 70 percent of the projects are planned by the learner himself, who seeks help and subject matter from a variety of circumstances, experts, and printed resources. Tough further defined a learning project as a series of related episodes adding up to at least seven hours. In each episode, more than half of the person's total motivation is to gain and retain certain knowledge and skill, or to produce some other lasting change in himself. Typically the learning episodes which make up a project are from thirty to sixty minutes in length.

The interviewers found that many people have difficulty recognizing learning projects because the projects are so often woven into their lives. Consequently, helping these learners recall specific projects requires considerable skill. Less than 1 percent of all of the learning projects uncovered by the interviewers were taken for credit. This finding, of course, raises the question of the needs that were manifest in the selection of learning projects.

Tough sees pleasure, self-esteem, and favorable response from others as the primary motivating factors. In addition, he

suggests that learning projects are undertaken because of a change in status or the passage from one developmental stage to another, such as establishing a home, or becoming a parent, or getting a divorce. This latter observation is particularly significant in light of the recent and graphic portrayal of the adult developmental stages by Sheehy (1976).

Tough's analysis of why people learn reflects his pragmatic approach to research and suffers from the absence of a systematic theory. Nevertheless, his contribution highlights the value of examining learning projects from an idiographic standpoint. Similar studies will be very useful to those planning programs for an increasing variety of adult constituencies with wide-ranging needs.

In a recent monograph I advocated a greater emphasis on Life-Centered Education. I identified specific transactional roles from which the learning agenda of adults might be extrapolated. Illustrations of possible learning agenda are as follows:

Personal Development Needs. Clarifying personal values, maintaining health and physical fitness, strengthening personal identity, improving learning skills, strengthening relationships, increasing communication skills, enlarging self-awareness;

Career Development Needs. Engaging in career self-appraisal, analyzing career opportunities, acquiring career competences, evaluating employment opportunities, adjusting to promotion, acquiring "job-getting" skills, planning for retirement;

Family Life Needs. Understanding family planning, clarifying role expectations, planning for economic security, strengthening family unity, comprehending developmental stages and adult crises, understanding legal rights, developing essential consumer skills;

Civic Development Needs. Influencing political decisions, coping with bureaucracies, using community resources, analyzing community issues, participating in voluntary activities, analyzing cultural value systems, appraising political candidates;

Cultural Development Needs. Understanding our cultural value system, acquiring historical perspectives, enjoying cultural artifacts and art forms, appreciating ethnic cultures, learning culturally based skills in art, music, literature, and so on;

Recreational Development Needs. Developing vocational and recreational skills, planning travel experiences, exploring outdoor life, appreciating sporting events (Raines, 1974, pp. 16A-16B).

Some of these needs can be responded to in the regular academic program of the college, while others require special

workshops, seminars, or community services programs. Many of them spawn the kinds of adult learning projects which Tough described in his research.

CHAPTER 2
ASSESSING NOMOTHETIC EXPECTATIONS

Our communities are composed of interrelated institutions (economic, political, educational, and so on), which are in turn made up of related organizations (such as businesses, agencies, schools). Each of these subsystems has specific functions whose performance is needed by society to maintain its stability or enhance its development. Individuals working within each type of organization assume the prescribed roles necessary for performing those functions. Consequently, such persons become societal or organizational agents — at least while they are on the job. (Some have trouble shaking off their roles even at home.) Through education, training, and experience they acquire varying levels of expertise, and in the process they assume a nomothetic attitude, which is derived from a continuing involvement with the collective and normative expression of the goals, practices, customs, mores, traditions, expectations of the organization.

To assess nomothetic expectations and requirements is to learn what the organization, or agency, or community desires in terms of resources, structure, and commitments. A number of writers have observed that an organizational or community need is the distance between what exists and what members of the organization feel should exist. In this context, problems are the barriers to fulfillment of the shared goals or aspirations.

Those within the organizations and agencies are in a position to provide significant information about their needs as role incumbents, the training needs of others in the organization, the needs of their clients or customers (as these needs are inferred from their contacts with clients), and the needs of their organization from an operational point of view. In a sense they are "experts" on the functioning of their organization. Of course, we must always recognize that the groups served by the organization are also "experts" whose individual descriptions of the organization's functioning are also valuable. It is important to keep in mind the differences between the views of these two sets of experts when using the term *community needs*. I hope we learned this lesson well during the social revolution I referred to earlier; at

that time agency personnel, accustomed to defining the needs of client groups, found their own definitions of community needs to be considerably at variance with the perceptions of the clients. The clash was so strong that for a while we mistrusted the nomothetic view of the professional. In assessing needs, we must balance well the idiographic and the nomothetic.

COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

As Marris and Rein (1967) point out, our political structure is designed so that no single power, at any level of government, shall claim an authority broad enough to control all the social institutions of a community. So, the community college does not control the economic, political, religious, familial, or governmental components of the community social system, nor do any of these control the college. Yet to be successful, the college must share information and reach consensus with other parts of the system. Donald Michael (1973) uses the term "boundary spanning" to refer to those activities that relate an organization to its environment.

Effective boundary spanning is necessary *if the community college is to assess the educational components of community problems* such as: (1) changing priorities in the use of local or regional resources, (2) handling population growth, (3) improving communication between agencies and groups in the community, (4) improving and expanding the economic structure and employment patterns of the community, (5) responding to the changing roles of women, (6) handling problems of youth, such as drugs, dropping out of school, unemployment, (7) improving health and medical practices, (8) increasing sensitivity to ethnic and racial groups, (9) strengthening the role of the family, (10) reducing crime and delinquency, (11) improving social and governmental services. The following listing suggests some boundary-spanning activities developed from a nomothetic perspective.

Economic Development

1. Studying the community's needs for apprentices, technical personnel, and middle-level managers
2. Assessing the need for career counseling services
3. Evaluating the need for on-the-job refresher training and job retraining
4. Ascertaining the need for labor education programs
5. Helping community agencies study the potential growth of local businesses and industries

Governmental Development

1. Studying the need for seminars on and inservice training in interagency communication and cooperation
2. Assessing the need for training programs for community volunteers
3. Evaluating the need for education programs for governmental officials on topics such as zoning and land use

Educational Development

1. Assessing literacy in the community
2. Studying the school dropout rate and its relationship to other community problems
3. Ascertaining the learning opportunities within various organizations, such as businesses, industries, churches, and agencies

Social Services Development

1. Studying the educational needs of older citizens
2. Assessing the inservice training needs of social workers, home economists, and other employees who provide social services
3. Evaluating the need for seminars for community leaders on the needs of low-income groups
4. Determining the need for educational programs related to intercultural group relations and communications
5. Evaluating the educational needs of low-income groups, including basic literacy programs

Health Development

1. Studying the need for inservice training for community health care providers
2. Assessing the need for programs for parents and educators on such topics as drug abuse and mental health

Professions Development

1. Assessing the current learning needs of various professionals

2. Identifying the educational resources in state universities for meeting the needs of local professionals
3. Exploring the possibilities for training additional paraprofessionals and analyzing what the colleges would need to do to prepare them

Community Development

1. Assessing the extent to which people seem to identify with the local community and which aspects of the community they identify with
2. Determining common concerns or interests which have the potential for bringing people together and giving them a sense of common identity

These are only a few of the possible avenues of a nomothetic needs assessment. The college need not assess every facet of community life. In fact, it would be better off to choose one particular area and concentrate on translating the needs it finds into programs.

CHAPTER 3
TRANSACTIONAL APPROACHES TO NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Neither the paper-pencil survey nor the structured interview provides opportunities for respondents to interact with other respondents while completing the questionnaire or interview. We have often observed that when given a chance to clarify their thoughts with peers, some respondents are inclined to modify their replies. Often they think of ideas they might otherwise ignore. Consequently, a method that permits interaction or transaction has certain advantages. It seems to generate greater involvement and commitment among participants. It also tends to generate ideas that are more directly related to their lives, and those ideas tend to be expressed in their language rather than in the language of the researcher. Obviously, an interactive approach with a representative group of constituents is desirable in building a survey instrument for later use with a larger sample when the *extent* of a need or concern can be determined through survey techniques.

THE TASK FORCE APPROACH

The systematic and dynamic approach to assessing community needs described by Brooks (1972) is based on a task force study conducted by the Georgia Center for Continuing Education. The Center emphasized identifying key leaders of a target community who were subsequently involved in defining community problems, establishing priorities, and establishing links with the local community college so that the college might respond with appropriate programs. The steps in this study were: (1) locating a host community, (2) conducting library research on the community, (3) developing an interview schedule, (4) identifying positional and reputational leaders (75 to 100), (5) selecting and training the interviewers, (6) doing field interviews, (7) processing the data and preparing a report, (8) giving public feedback to the community, and (9) developing educational programs to meet the needs.

Some of the community needs that were identified by the study were (in rank order) consolidation of city and county govern-

ments, improved recreational program facilities, more and better low-income housing, and improved public schools. Clearly, both nomothetic and idiographic needs were diagnosed. The local colleges involved (Macon Junior College and Augusta College) were provided an opportunity through joint sponsorship to demonstrate their community concern. Brooks' report unfortunately does not indicate whether the experience changed college programming.

THE NOMINAL GROUP PROCESS

Within the past ten years Andrew Van de Ven and André Delbecq (1972) have developed a quasi-interactive method of assessing needs called the Nominal Group Process (NGP). They define it as a "structured meeting which seeks to provide an orderly procedure for obtaining qualitative information from target groups who are most closely associated with a problem area" (1972, p. 338). They indicate that it was developed in the late 1960s from social psychology studies of decision conferences, from studies of program design in the aerospace field, from industrial engineering problems of social science, and from environmental studies of organizations by program planners. By giving the participants specific tasks to do, NGP seeks to capitalize on their creative potential without bogging down in the typical interaction problems found in less structured groups (Figure 4).

The application of this technique in a hospital setting, as reported by the authors, demonstrates its potential for serving as a pilot research instrument. The technique seems particularly well suited to identifying the concerns of a well-defined and relatively homogeneous target group. Because of the time needed to obtain contributions from the participants (usually three hours unless adaptations are made), the method must be restricted to a somewhat limited sample of the target group.

The following advantages seem to be associated with the use of NGP, according to various writings of the authors (Van de Ven and Delbecq, 1971, 1972, 1974).

1. NGP allows target groups to single out critical problems in a nonthreatening setting.
2. It seeks contributions from all the participants before it asks each member to rank the various proposals.
3. It deliberately sets up (through the silent brainstorming period) a dynamic tension which is seen by the authors as fostering creative thinking.
4. It eliminates semantic barriers by providing for communi-

Figure 4. A Schemata of the Nominal Group Process

FOCUS	STEPS	PROCEDURES	TIME
GENERATING IDEAS	Silent Brainstorming	Members write their individual responses to the challenge question	15 min.
	Idea Recording	Round-Robin listing of responses on flip charts without comment	20 min.
	Idea Clarification	Clarification and coordination of Reponses without value judgment	20 min.
		COFFEE BREAK	10 min.
PRIORITY SETTING	Ranking Ideas	Members use 3x5 cards to rank the ten most important ideas individually	15 min.
	Recording Group Judgments	Members post their rankings by their preferred items on flip chart	10 min.
	Discussion	Group discusses and defends relative merits of various responses to the question	30 min.
	Scoring Period	Members individually score top ten items on 100 point scale and turn in scores	10 min.

cation and clarification of ideas before the aptness of the ideas is judged.

5. It provides a structure which can control those who would seek to dominate the discussion or otherwise get their personal agenda adopted.
6. It permits a rational examination by group participants of both the subjective (affective) and objective (cognitive) aspects of the problem.
7. It appears to increase group members' identification with the problems identified.

Van de Ven and Delbecq advocate careful selection of target group members. The participants must be homogeneous enough to be able to agree on some priorities. Even more important, the questions posed to the group must be perceived by the participants as clear, relevant, and worthy of their time. Implied in the challenge questions and the very process itself is the idea that some constructive action will eventually emerge from the deliberations.

The authors also report on research comparing interacting groups with nominal and delphi groups (Van de Ven and Delbecq, 1974). Their study examined the quality of the ideas generated and the participants' satisfaction with each of the processes. They concluded that when the task is a fact-finding problem with no known solution, the nominal and delphi methods are equally effective and both are clearly more effective than conventional interaction groups.

Although their research is interesting and somewhat persuasive, additional research using a different design and conducted by Thad Green (1975) at Mississippi State does not support their findings. Comparing authoritarian, permissive, and democratic interaction groups with nominal groups in a residence hall, Green found no significant differences among the groups in the items generated, the number of unique responses, or the quality of responses.

A community-based application of the NGP was made by the director of Community Services at Waubonsee Community College in Illinois. The director, through a previously established relationship with the city council of Aurora, Illinois, was able to work with twenty citizens representing various agencies of the community, including such diverse groups as the Illinois Migrant Council, the Chamber of Commerce, the League of Women Voters, and a Child Development Center. The purpose of the NGP was to determine the most important community problems to which general revenue sharing funds should be applied.

The committee produced forty-eight suggestions (needs or problems or solutions) which they then ranked according to which items needed action first. A subsequent report of the meeting in the newspaper indicated considerable satisfaction with the NGP as well as strong support for the first action to be taken — establishment of a city health department.

THE DELPHI TECHNIQUE

Somewhat related to the Nominal Group Process is the Delphi Technique. Both ask the participants to respond privately to a challenge question which the researchers think is important to the respondents. The Delphi Technique, however, selects participants who are considered to be experts on the subject from which the challenge question has been selected. And the delphi method is most commonly concerned with projecting future needs. Unique to the delphi approach is the continuing refinement of responses through a feedback system which includes several "rounds." In each round, the group members refine the ideas reported in the previous round.

The Rand Corporation under a grant from the air force first developed the Delphi Technique for making policy decisions. Although futurists seeking to forecast technological changes have been its chief users, delphi is gaining favor as a planning device in educational circles.

In their assessment of the needs of senior citizens in Northern Illinois, the designers of Project Renewal (1973) submitted a delphi questionnaire to key persons in various agencies that deal with older people. To save time, the researchers listed several commonly identified needs under such headings as adequate income, basic material goods, health, knowledge and skills, and personal and social development. The fifty-seven delphi respondents were requested to check those items perceived as "very much needed" by senior citizens in the area. Considerable write-in space was provided and respondents were requested to elaborate their reasons for their choices and to clarify the nature of the problems observed. Part Two of the first questionnaire asked the agency personnel to comment on the learning experiences that these clients might need or want.

The results of the first survey were summarized and presented to the participating "delphinians." In the second round they were asked to rank the needs identified in round one. The changes in the results from round one to round two are interest-

ing. For instance, in the first round only *one* of the fifty-seven agency respondents called for a "clearinghouse of information on resources" for senior citizens, yet in the second round it was given the second highest priority. However, there were some constants too. The need for transportation was the most frequently cited need in round one and was also given the highest priority in round two.

Of the twenty-six needs identified in the first round, only twelve were given high priority for immediate action in the second round. Three of the needs, "use of volunteers," "visitation calls on the elderly," and "use of mass media," did not appear in the first list. Apparently these write-in responses in round two were evinced by the new emphasis on the immediacy of need.

The Project Renewal researchers felt that the Delphi Technique was useful in giving respondents a chance to rethink their original responses. In addition, it managed to eliminate some of the nonproductive problems which can be discussed in interactive groups when agency personnel seek "to lay their expertise on one another."

THE TRANSACTIONAL EVALUATION PROCESS

The Transactional Evaluation Model (TEM) was designed to increase the likelihood that follow-up action and implementation would result from needs assessment. It was also designed to include the ideas of those people who are most apt to doubt or object to the results of the assessment. TEM was developed for use in urban situations where differences of opinion are sharp and often volatile and where citizens prefer to express their views orally rather than respond to questionnaires.

Harriet Talmadge (1975) of the University of Illinois at Chicago, who is a leader in the use of TEM, comments that even traditional interaction strategies used in organizational development models (such as T-groups, encounter groups, and heightened awareness groups) are not adequate for diagnosing needs and producing action. She states: "What appears missing in the newer models and methods is an approach that synthesizes the identification of group goals, values, and needs within the context of the school/community milieu and a means for making group incongruencies a functional part of the program and evaluation design" (1975, p. 34). Talmadge credits Rippey (1973) with formulating the Transactional Model. Although TEM has emphasized the evaluation of social action programs, it seems to be a useful

method in any needs assessment program where there is likely to be considerable resistance because a dissident group believes that the assessment is biased in some particular direction.

According to Talmadge, the planning group should comprise members of the target group and proposers of the social action program as well as planners of the assessment. Conflicts are brought forth so that those who feel negative toward the potential outcome will have a chance to influence the design of the project. The conflict itself is viewed as productive in that it uncovers problems that might otherwise go unrecognized. For example, a lack of trust may be at the source of the conflict. From the planners' point of view, the mistrust may be irrational, but unless it is acknowledged and dealt with, it may block later efforts to implement solutions. The advocates of TEM urge that people with differing purposes, views, and values work together continuously to identify needs, implement programs, and evaluate their results. This approach is antithetical to the so-called rational method of the Research and Development and Diffusion Model, in which an idea is developed and then sold. The RD&D technique is not useful in a situation where feelings run high because the outcome is perceived as having pervasive consequences.

The first phase is concerned with establishing and structuring the group process. In the second phase, the researchers develop a Transactional Evaluation Instrument (TEI) by taking the following steps:

1. Various viewpoints are translated into a single clear statement of the issue. This becomes the challenge question (such as, "What are the major barriers which prevent prospective students from making use of college resources?").
2. The participants are given an opportunity to write their responses, individually and privately, on a sheet of paper (in their own native language).
3. Their responses are collected, tabulated, and categorized. They are not identified with any participant. The original wording is maintained as much as possible. The most representative and divergent statements are selected.
4. From these statements an opinionnaire is constructed and distributed to the participants, who then indicate the degree of their agreement with each statement. The results are tabulated and given to the group.
5. When discussion of the results begins, those views on which consensus is most likely to be achieved are considered first.

In the third phase, the group leader seeks to resolve or at least manage conflicts by looking for programmatic solutions that might be acceptable to various factions within the group. During the fourth phase, progress is monitored, and various groups agree to assume responsibility for various facets of the exploratory program. This is the period of formative evaluation.

"The fifth phase is a recycling of any one or more of the first four phases as implementation problems and formative evaluation data alert participants to pending conflict" (Talmadge, 1975, p. 38). The challenge is to accept each problem as a potential opportunity for conflict resolution using any of the appropriate group process tools.

The success of TEM appears to depend on a leader skilled in managing group processes who (1) is perceived as a neutral party; (2) maintains an accepting, nonjudgmental relationship with all members of the group; and (3) is effective in clarifying the various views of the members. Proponents of the Transactional Evaluation Model are enthusiastic about the results. It will be interesting to see how other researchers evaluate the effectiveness of TEM (and how the proponents might deal with those researchers who are not supportive).

THE CHARETTE

Less complex than TEM but somewhat similar in nature is the group process called the Charette. In the latter a larger constituency is divided into separate groups to deal with various aspects of a commonly experienced problem. The subgroups meet simultaneously with periodic breaks so that the chairmen of the subgroups can report their progress to the larger assembly. A summary statement is provided by each subgroup at the conclusion of the sessions.

This process has been used at the Airlie House meetings of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges as the participants have sought to address a single major challenge facing community colleges each year. The outcome of each meeting has been a publication which focuses on the issue at point. A series of resolutions regarding various facets of the issues is included. The final report is reviewed and after revisions is adopted by the assembly-at-large.

Apparently, the Charette is particularly effective in helping a large organization such as a college, a community, or a school system arrive at a set of summary statements which are acceptable to the majority of participants. Such deliberations will, one hopes, provide the basis for concerted efforts to meet important needs and resolve critical problems.

CHAPTER 4
COMMUNITY SURVEYS

A community or constituency questionnaire survey is best undertaken after a transactional assessment has been made, because neither the paper-pencil survey nor the interview survey is effective in diagnosing or simulating the actual needing process of constituents. However, surveys are very useful in verifying the *extent* to which previously diagnosed needs exist within the constituency.

There are two types of community surveys: the omnibus survey and the targeted survey. In the first case, they examine a random sample of citizens-at-large; in the second, the researchers select a particular group or constituency within the service area and tailor the questions to that particular group.

THE OMNIBUS QUESTIONNAIRE

A number of recent surveys reported in the ERIC system might be classified as omnibus surveys of learning needs or preferences. Some are part of long-range studies, while others are a part of ad hoc planning efforts. Analysis of the questionnaires used in various needs assessment efforts indicates that most items could be placed in one of the following categories:

Demographic Characteristics. The respondents' age, sex, race, marital status, occupation, educational level, socioeconomic level, and so on, are examined. Such data are useful in comparing respondents' characteristics with those of the whole local populace, as identified by the census. They can also be used to compare respondents who express various learning preferences with those who do not. From a demographic analysis the educational planner can project the size and nature of the potential constituencies that the college might serve (such as handicapped persons, senior citizens, reentry women, and ethnic minority groups). In effect, demographic data are the primary bases for classifying the comments of the respondents in a meaningful way.

Learning Preferences. What kinds of learning activities have respondents engaged in and what kinds of additional opportunities do they suggest? To assess learning preferences, the educational planner must develop a list of such activities for inclusion

in the survey instrument, because many respondents have difficulty recalling previous activities. A well-constructed list stimulates their memories. If the list is constructed according to carefully conceived categories, it facilitates tabular summaries (for example, learning activities related to consumerhood, family life, occupation, leisure and cultural development, personal and emotional development). Extra space for write-in responses is helpful in each section. From an ethical point of view, the planner should also make clear what the college intends to do about those activities that respondents most prefer. In other words, he should not mention learning activities which the college is unlikely to offer, because many persons believe the content of a questionnaire has a direct connection with later action. During the sixties' revolution, for instance, some ethnic groups resented the gap between their responses to questionnaires and subsequent community response.

Personal Concerns. What kinds of personal concerns do respondents express which might have implications for education? Since such an assessment is typically anonymous, respondents usually will convey their feelings about such problems as alcohol or drug abuse, mental health, divorce, and personal confidence. The link between these concerns and possible educational programming should be clearly evident in the structure of the instrument. The recent sourcebook from the National Institute of Education entitled *Community Colleges Respond to Elders* (Glickman and Others, 1975) has an excellent example of this type of connection. Respondents are asked to associate their various personal interests with possible programs by drawing penciled lines.

Access Barriers. What do respondents identify as the external and internal barriers to using college resources? They will probably find it easier to name outside ones. Obviously, distance, transportation, money, and job and family requirements will be among those most frequently mentioned. Internal blocks due to lack of confidence, lack of information, lack of learning skills, uncertainty about functioning in a college environment, and the like are less likely to be identified but are equally important and have even more implications for educational programming.

Information Sources. Where do respondents get their information about educational and recreational opportunities? Studies of responses to this question have led many colleges to modify or abandon the *traditional* college catalog as a prime source of information. Instead there is greater use of newspaper supplements, handbills, and TV or radio. Shopping malls have become dissemination centers where special booths are manned by college personnel. Careful study of the information sources in a given service area can be a productive part of assessment.

Program Awareness. To what extent are respondents aware of existing educational programs and facilities and to what extent have they made use of them in recent months? Some colleges have found it useful to identify each year the number of citizens who come to the campus and the number who attend college-sponsored events away from the campus. It would be most interesting to chart the percentage of community members who have at least one contact with the college per year. One of the side benefits of a needs assessment conducted by the college is that it increases the community's awareness of college activities and opportunities. Although the word *College* has served the community college well as an attracting status symbol, it also conjures an image of exclusivity for many citizens. Providing a checklist of less traditional learning opportunities is one way of offsetting this restrictive image.

Delivery Packages. What kinds of educational program packaging (such as workshops, seminars, short conferences, self-study learning packages, courses) are most appealing to respondents? Although an assessment of these sorts of preferences can be somewhat informative, it is probably foolish to build a program exclusively on such an assessment. For example, extensive development of self-study learning packages is not indicated until the planner appraises how much they are actually used.

Generating a considerable number of items for an omnibus survey is not difficult, so a word of caution is in order. It is far easier to write questions than to determine explicitly how responses will actually influence programming. As more than one novice researcher has discovered, one can almost drown in the data floods produced by computers.

To produce satisfactory results, a survey (particularly an omnibus survey) must have clear objectives, and its questions and summary tables must be directly linked to those aims. Many educational planners have found it helpful early in the study to translate the assessment objectives into simple, straightforward questions as a way of organizing and presenting their data. Some planners also find it useful to guess what the responses to important questions will be so that they will be sensitized to any major differences between their perceptions and the actual replies. This action offsets the tendency to say, "Oh sure, as I stop to think about it, I would have anticipated that response pattern." (If the planners guess that only about one-third of the respondents see finances as a barrier to the use of college resources and later find that more than two-thirds of them actually indicate finances as a primary hindrance, then the planners must adjust

their thinking or rationalize the finding.) Having baseline data from previous surveys is most helpful and speaks strongly for periodic assessments as a basis for identifying trends within the college's service area.

There were several omnibus studies in the ERIC files. Perhaps the most noted is that conducted for Florida Junior College at Jacksonville by the Community Assessment Laboratory of Columbia, South Carolina. This group of survey specialists assisted the FJC staff in formulating clearly stated objectives for the study. The objectives were to expand and improve educational programs, assess the conscious educational needs of community members, evaluate the college's promotional efforts within the community, facilitate attendance by removing barriers, provide information about the college to the community, evaluate the quality of current programs and their impact on the community, and determine community "demand" for various kinds of programs. In a telephone conversation, Dr. Benjamin Wygal, president of Florida Junior College, indicated that the survey had been most beneficial in developing plans for the college. Dr. Roland Terrell, who heads the staff and program development of FJC, cited the following as the major contributions of the needs assessment survey: empirical data for decisionmaking in program development, the determination of effective channels for communication with the community, the removal of attendance barriers, and the evaluation of programs.

Again I wish to reiterate that the *omnibus* studies we found in the literature seemed to be more useful as image reflectors than as diagnostic devices.

THE TARGETED SURVEY

The omnibus survey is a useful tool for characterizing the nature and preferences of potential clienteles, but it is not considered effective for studying the needs of particular constituencies. For instance, in one survey reported in ERIC, only a few respondents (sometimes less than a dozen) represented large constituent groups, yet their replies were used to compare various groups. Although the sampling technique applied in this study seemed adequate for an omnibus assessment of citizens in the service area, it really was not adequate as a means of determining the needs of each client group. The more adequate and reliable approach is to conceptualize a given constituency and design an instrument expressly for its needs. The sample then is drawn randomly from

that targeted population. The literature contains several excellent examples of such studies, particularly of senior citizens, ethnic groups, and women.

HANDICAPPED CONSTITUENTS

Handicapped students were the focus of one study conducted by Block (1973) with assistance from Illinois Community Colleges. In the Block study, questionnaires were mailed to 4300 hearing-impaired persons listed in the national census of the deaf. Twelve hundred returned these questionnaires and 200 of these respondents were also interviewed. The survey indicated that three-fourths of the respondents were interested in resuming their education — largely in adult basic education. They were also interested in improving their vocational skills. Of particular concern was "direct supportive communication" in the classroom. Follow-up visits to about one-third of the Illinois Community Colleges revealed support among directors of adult or continuing education for serving deaf adults which led to a written recommendation by the Illinois Association of the Deaf for support by the colleges.

SENIOR CITIZENS

Several colleges throughout the country have established exemplary programs for senior citizens based on careful assessments of their needs. Surveys, interactive techniques, and special task forces have been employed to make these evaluations. Perhaps the best known of these surveys is the NIE study of programs for senior citizens mentioned earlier (Glickman and Others, 1975). This study, which included 150 community colleges throughout the country, examined the content and scope of programs for elders, the methods used to develop them, and the problems and possibilities in program development. The content of the assessment items was distributed equally among five categories: enrichment, retirement planning, second careers, advocacy, and services. Specific program models were suggested as means of responding to the needs identified in four of the categories.

This sourcebook is an important resource for those who would translate needs into educational program. It not only suggests appropriate curricula and a program development model, but also expresses the desirability of building a strong alliance with the senior-citizen constituency.

The researchers of Project Renewal (1973) used a questionnaire for individual senior citizens and the Delphi Technique for agency personnel in the service areas of three community colleges. Their work demonstrates the usefulness of consortium efforts to assess needs and design programs. Although their approach to needs assessment and their results are well covered in this report, the authors do not mention any implementation of educational programs. Those interested in any follow-up efforts of this project should contact Highland Community College in Freeport, Kishwaukee College in Malto, Rock Valley College in Rockford, or the Adult Education Division of Northern Illinois University.

The Southern California Community College Institutional Research Association focused on the retraining interests of older adults. More than eighteen institutions participated, and the results obtained from seven colleges are reported in an ERIC document (Galvin and Others, 1975). Workshops were held and a questionnaire was devised to determine the particular needs of adults in the service area of each participating institution. The study concluded that community colleges have a significant responsibility in helping older adults plan for their retirement.

A citizens' task force of twenty-five persons from the service area of Shasta College in Redding, California, was formed to propose goals for an older adult program (Collyer and Greenleaf, 1975). They devised a study to determine the need for (1) preretirement training and counseling; (2) a talent bank; (3) continuing education; and (4) health care and nutrition information. More than fifty persons from business, labor, government, churches, and "senior" organizations participated in a workshop. A summary of their discussions is included in the report. They recommended that a college coordinator be appointed along with an advisory group, that a budget be established for the program, that college staff members be trained, and that a supportive climate be established at the college.

LATINO CONSTITUENTS

Hearing of a needs assessment program at Harper College in Palatine, Illinois, Mr. August Sallas sought out officials at Moraine Valley College in Palos Hills, Illinois, to see whether a similar study might be made in his Latino community. The director of institutional research at Moraine, Dr. Al Hecht (1973), was asked to conduct a study to determine if such a need existed

in the Moraine service area. His preliminary analysis of census information on the various neighborhoods — on the educational attainments of their members, the literacy levels, the high school completion rate, and the language barrier — convinced him that a survey was needed. Turning to an examination of available resources in the immediate area, the college found that many were available but not known to the community. This discovery led to a Latino Night on campus. Representatives of the various agencies were invited to the campus, and buses were used to transport interested Latinos to the college. This activity launched a relationship with the Latino community that the college intends to maintain. A considerable increase in the use of college and community resources has been noted by college officials.

BLACK CONSTITUENTS

Focusing on the needs of urban blacks in Wilmington, Delaware, the Delaware Technical and Community College joined with participants in a Model Cities project to assess needs *(Community Oriented Educational Planning . . .*, 1973). Their report deals with orientation and institutional awareness, community characteristics, facilities planning, the liaison between the college and its advisory groups, and ways of responding to community needs. A follow-up telephone conversation with a college administrator, Dr. Ruth M. Laws, indicated that an extensive need for dental care and for education on this subject was the overriding need identified by the study.

NATIVE INDIANS

One of the most fascinating studies in the ERIC literature concerns the educational needs of the many bands of Indians in the Fraser Valley of British Columbia *(Education Needs of Native Indians . . .*, 1975). The report includes a profile of the attitudes and values of Native Americans, a discussion of their educational and psychosocial needs, as well as their community interests and needs, and a list of possible strategies for implementing programs. What makes this study particularly outstanding is the empathic regard it shows for a system of values quite different from that in contemporary Canadian society. To meet the needs of this constituency, the authors propose (1) an inservice education program for the college staff, (2) community activities that would bring the groups together in informal settings, (3) a college emphasis on

Indian culture and its many artifacts, and (4) regular meetings between college counselors and social workers assigned to the Indian reserves.

As one reflects on the process of translating the needs of special constituencies into educational programs, one is struck by the obvious advantages of targeted studies and programs. First, if the initial contact between the college and the client group builds trust and confidence within the group, the constituents are usually ready for action. Second, if the college establishes an alliance with key persons in that group, it has a better chance of making a realistic assessment of needs as well as developing useful programs. Third, the college probably can capitalize on the programmatic successes of another institution if the identified needs of their various constituents are sufficiently similar. Fourth, identifying specific needs of a reasonably homogeneous target group is easier than determining those of the wider population; consequently, educational programming based on limited studies is likely to be more effective.

At the same time, one should beware of lumping all of the people in a single constituency, which may contain many important and different subgroups. When studying the needs of reentry women, for example, we find that divorcees have a set of problems different from those of housewives. And the needs of older adults who are completely dependent on social security differ markedly from those of older adults who do not really need their social security checks.

CHAPTER 5
TRANSLATING NEEDS INTO EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

STRATEGIC/ADAPTIVE VS. ALLOCATIVE PLANNING

For the purposes of this discussion, we should examine two forms of planning. The first of these might be called strategic or adaptive planning. In this case we ask the following basic question: How appropriate are the goals of our institutions to the educational needs and the economic, political, and social realities of the community we serve? The assumption is that, on the basis of relevant community information, the college will adapt its organization and programs to respond to important educational needs. And it will undertake assessment studies to determine the distance between its programs and what the community requires. Thus, strategic or adaptive planning starts with the external environment. It assumes a climate within the college which is able to tolerate and achieve necessary institutional change based on new information from the community and the broader society.

Strategic planning, then, in the words of Katz and Kahn (1966), involves the means by which an organization seeks to modify its own structures to meet the needs of a changing world. The limiting factor is the relative openness of the system to external influence. In discussing this factor, Katz and Kahn speak of the *differentiative* and *integrative needs* of organizations. Differentiation refers to the ability of the organization to change by neutralizing the influence of existing subsystems or values in order to create new ones more responsive to current environmental needs or demands. Integration refers to the ability of the organization to achieve stability and predictability in its internal affairs. The differentiative needs of the organization require openness to external influence, while the integrative needs require a certain resistance to external influences and a striving to control and limit institutional changes. Since both are vital to the life of an organization, some balance between the two is essential.

A second form of planning, which is perhaps more related to the integrative than the differentiative needs of an organization, is that of allocative planning. It focuses on what is — the reality of now. Here the emphasis is on decisions related to the proper

distribution of college resources. Whereas strategic planners question and change the existing goals of the organization, allocative planners tend to resist external influences on their goals and priorities and seek to allocate resources according to existing goals and programs.

Allocative planning is more commonplace in community colleges today than strategic planning for three obvious reasons:

1. We lack skills in assessing community needs.
2. We are not clear about effective methods for translating community needs into imperatives for institutional decision making.
3. Strategic planning is resisted within the organization because staff members fear that fundamental changes will be required in their working style and habits and in their responsibilities.

In his book *On Learning to Plan and Planning to Learn* Donald Michael (1973) presents the basic orientation that is necessary if community college leaders are to overcome resistance to strategic planning. They must be willing to learn to plan and must understand that a basic purpose of planning is to learn about new potentialities and opportunities for the college which may require the development of new skills and attitudes on the part of the staff.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT IN STRATEGIC PLANNING

Planning involves both the short-range and long-range objectives of the college. In this context, needs assessment is an activity that helps to direct the college toward establishing its aims and achieving them. For the purposes of distinction, one might view planning efforts intended to achieve short-range goals primarily as problem solving; that is, planners assess needs and then try to respond immediately with educational programs intended to deal with identified needs or community problems. Generally, the available personnel skills and program options of the college are assumed to be sufficient to respond effectively.

Efforts to reach medium-range goals might be termed strategic planning for constituency development, which is both conceptual and immediately practical. Those who engage in such planning are learning that the present personnel skills and program options may not be sufficient for the march into the future and that skills and programs must be acquired in an orderly way. In this context, the needs assessment gives decision makers basic

data that could guide them in learning what programs, personnel skills, financial resources, and facilities may be required in developing programs for new constituencies.

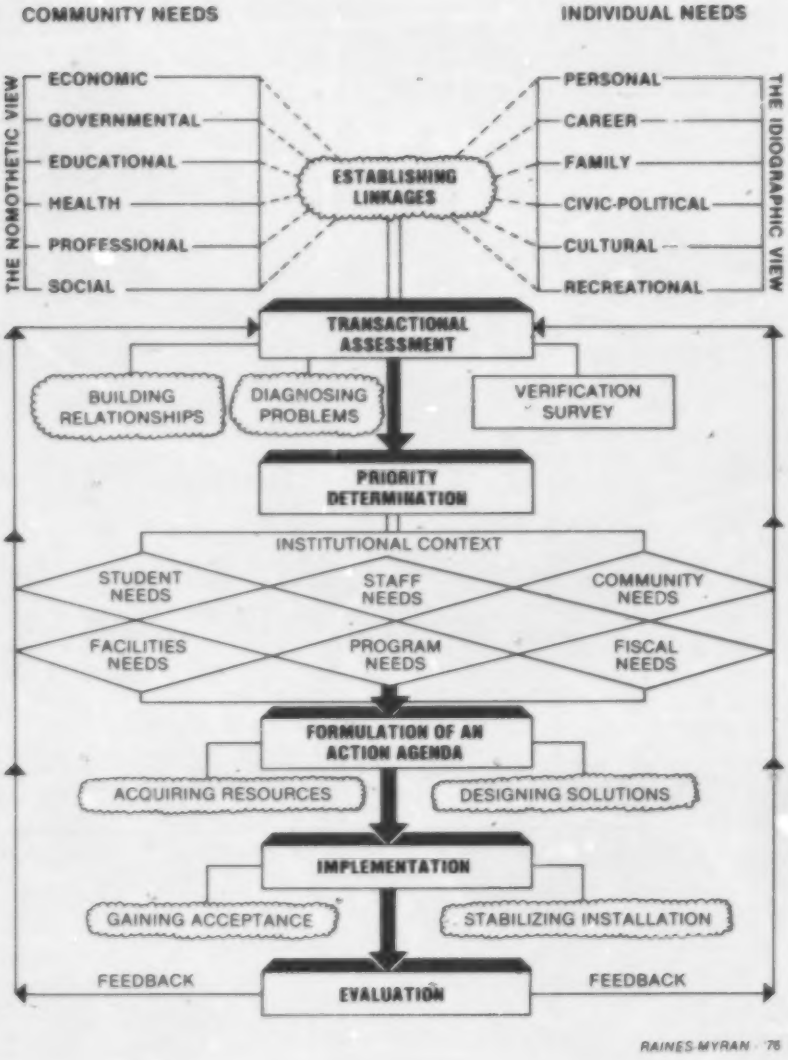
A STRATEGIC PLANNING MODEL

Figure 5 presents a model for strategic planning which can facilitate program development for new constituencies. It brings together the various components of needs assessment that have been outlined in this monograph. Perhaps it would be useful to set forth several of the basic assumptions on which the model rests.

1. A suitable model for constituency development requires integration of the nomothetic and idiographic views of the community.
2. A transactional involvement of key representatives of the constituency as well as community agents who work with the constituents and educational planners at the college is highly desirable for identifying needs, implementing programs, and evaluating outcomes.
3. This method must focus on both implicit and explicit agenda of constituents as well as relationships between their agenda and their critical problems, needs, goals, values, and experiences.
4. Verification of the identified agenda and the extent of its prevalence is best determined through targeted surveys among constituents after a transactional assessment has been conducted.
5. While the omnibus survey is helpful in obtaining some estimate of the prevailing image of the college and in assessing tentative educational preferences and problems among citizens at large, its capacity to anticipate the actual responses of prospective constituents seems quite limited; consequently, its value as a *planning* instrument for constituency development is limited.

The rationale for each element in the model is presented in the following narrative description. The model itself represents an integration of the thinking of Getzels and Thelen (1972), Guba (1960), Rippey (1973), Van de Ven and Delbecq (1972), and Havelock (1973). To make the presentation of the model more vivid and practical, I will describe a hypothetical situation at Everyman Community College, which is exploring the possibility of increasing its response to handicapped students.

Figure 5. A Strategic Planning Model



Transactional Assessment. The *processes* of planning as well as the structured *stages* of planning should be emphasized. So the process of *establishing linkages* with members of the community and representative members of the constituency should initiate the *transactional assessment stage.* (The initial part of this is described on p. 40.) The college needs to make contact with all those persons who are concerned about "handicappers" (a term currently favored by students with handicaps): businessmen, government officials, school officials, health care personnel, lawyers, and physicians, as well as social club members who sponsor benefits for persons with various kinds of handicaps. These community members hold varying ideas and opinions associated with their nomothetic roles in the community. Particularly strong views are held by rehabilitation personnel, who have developed positions on the most suitable methods of assisting the handicappers.

In addition, the handicappers have differing attitudes. There are bound to be some members of this constituent group who feel that the "established" view does not take into account their own personal situation. Consequently, they want opportunities to make their positions known. And all members of the group undoubtedly have concerns about handling their various life roles as career persons, family members, citizens, culture bearers, and leisure-time users. The educational implications of those concerns and interests are an important aspect of the transactional assessment.

In addition to representatives of the community and the constituency, members of the college staff and student body need to be involved. Counselors, teachers, and educational planners for the college should participate in the whole process of program [illegible]ment. And those persons who may hold negative opinions about the feasibility of establishing such a program because of costs and other factors should also be a part of the needs assessment.

The *transactional assessment* is an effort to achieve a consensus on the nature of the problems, needs, goals, and agenda of persons with various kinds of handicaps. As a part of this *diagnosis,* members of the exploratory group should seek to understand (a) the impact on the individual, (b) the ways that a handicapper can satisfy his or her needs for *stimulation* and enjoyment, and (c) the effect of a handicap on one's *identity* struggle. An awareness of the goals that are visualized by handicappers is important, particularly the ramifications of those goals for educational development. Finally the sharing of the agenda of various handicappers in the group may help nonhandicappers

increase their capacity for empathic awareness. This form of problem assessment is more apt to produce realistic planning than the detached, "objective" approach of traditional diagnostic methods. In the process new relationships are likely to emerge in the planning group along with a joint sense of commitment. At this point, an identification of potential and specific educational interests, barriers to participation in college programs, and personal concerns is feasible and can serve as the basis for constructing a formal needs assessment.

A paper and pencil or interview survey can *verify the extent* of the actual interests, barriers, concerns, and so on, within the potential constituency. Prospective members of the sample group should be given a clear picture of how the instrument was developed as well as how the information received is intended to be used. Using handicappers as volunteer interviewers would be most desirable after they have received the proper training.

Priority Determination. When survey results are available, they should be interpreted at a meeting of the planning group. With these data the group should be ready to prioritize goals for a program at the college. The institutional context should be made clear to the planners, particularly those not associated with the college. Whereas the partial intent of the first stage of the planning model is to sensitize nonconstituents to the views of the handicapper, the second stage must acquaint the constituents with the needs, problems, resources, and constraints of the college. In this way the prioritization will be realistic.

Plan of Action. Once priorities are set, the next step is to find ways of reaching them. At this point outside resources and consultants may be particularly helpful. Too often we launch plans in isolation, oblivious to the experiences of others. By consulting various journals, by visiting existing programs, and by talking with "experts" we have an opportunity to build on the success and avoid the pitfalls of previous efforts.

The desire to move to a solution is intense at this point, especially if some participants have already identified themselves with a particular solution. Despite this understandable desire for closure, the educational planner should make certain that available options are considered. It is probably best to establish a specific period of time for exploring and reporting on the plans of action used by other institutions. When that period ends, the group will presumably be in a much better position to make informal choices.

Now the group should be ready to brainstorm possible ways of achieving each objective. During this session, no constraints

or negative thinking are permitted. All participants first list, then share and clarify, and finally rank the ideas emerging from this session. (Some of the ideas related to various goals will overlap.) If the planning group is large, it might subdivide according to goals, or it might prefer to hear everyone's ideas about each goal. The latter requires considerably more time. Once the ideas for achieving the goals are listed in order of preference, the group has established a tentative agenda for action. It cannot realistically become a final agenda until the participants fully recognize the constraints within which the group must work (such as money, equipment, personnel, space, and uninformed attitudes).

In addition to becoming aware of these physical considerations, the group must acknowledge the psychological limitations. It should not expect too much. It is better to find success with a few ideas that can be implemented without undue difficulty than to launch an overly ambitious program. Furthermore, it must realize that "the people out there" have not been through "what we have been through," and consequently, their collective consciousness needs to be raised.

To be more specific, let's assume that the group's first goal is "To provide each handicapped person with a sense of belonging and security at the college." As it considers the restrictions on space and furnishings at the college, it may decide that "establishing a core of volunteer students to help the handicapper participate in college activities" should be given priority over "establishing a comfortable lounge in which the handicapper might relax with other handicapped students," even though the latter might be viewed as more important by the group. So that the group does not become discouraged about these initial limitations, it should plan the program in phases assuming that increased resources may be found for each phase.

When the plan of action has been adopted, the group should establish performance objectives just before launching implementation. This process will greatly simplify the evaluation stage and will be helpful in gaining acceptance of the program among key decision makers. By now, handicappers in the planning group should be aware of direct links between their own personal agenda and the institutional (program) agenda that have emerged. The statement of objectives relates goals to actual outcomes, thus providing members of the constituency with the realization that the program is also accountable to them.

Implementation. Implementation activities include the selection and training of staff members, the acquisition of facilities and equipment, the recruitment of constituents, the establishment

of contacts with related subsystems, the resolution of problems, the identification of emerging needs, the establishment of procedures for operation, and the systematic collection of data essential to evaluation. All these activities, of course, require skillful planners and managers. In order to survive, all programs must gain the acceptance of the larger system (college, division, department) which they serve, and they must be at least reasonably tolerated, if not accepted, by the related subsystems. The constituents, too, must show their support by using the program and, one hopes, by endorsing its efforts on their behalf.

Havelock (1973) suggests that the process of *gaining acceptance* will be facilitated if the program developer understands how a client goes about adopting a program. He recommends the paradigm of adoption phases devised by Rogers (1962): the client first must be aware of the program; then he becomes interested, evaluates its possible benefits, tries the idea, adopts it, and finally integrates it in his pattern of life. Although this paradigm concerns the adoption of innovations by individuals or informal groups, it is helpful in simulating the process that persons related to a new college program experience in accepting the offering. According to Havelock (1971), if educational programmers are aware of these steps, they are better able to synchronize their activities with the particular stage of the client. Such activities include: promoting the program, providing essential information, demonstrating how the program works or helps, training clients to make use of the program's resources, helping them with problems they may encounter, and reassuring them.

The effort to gain acceptance for a new program can also be furthered by first identifying the leaders among the constituents, the early adopters, the innovators, and the probable resisters.

If the earlier stages and strategies are well implemented, *stabilizing the innovation* tends to occur naturally. However, every complex process of change also has its unexpected impediments, such as sudden budget changes and loss of staff members, and these must be dealt with. The major factors in stabilizing a new program, according to Havelock (1973), are as follows:

1. Continuing reward for both students and staff members in maintaining the program.
2. Preparation and training of staff members so that they can easily function and fulfill their professional needs in the process.
3. Acceptance of the program by other people in the system who can see and acknowledge the contributions it is making.

4. A continuing evaluation which cultivates an openness on the part of the staff to ways of improving the program.
5. The capacity and willingness to straighten out malfunctions in the program as they occur.
6. Maintaining openness to new ways of tackling needs and problems as they occur.

One of the great difficulties in stabilizing innovative programs is the jealousy that can arise within the system if a new program gains much recognition and its staff members are granted special privileges (often made possible through special grants). When others feel unappreciated, they tend to react in destructive ways. Although a program for handicappers is not likely to arouse such feelings, I have seen outstanding programs designed to serve special groups dismantled by disgruntled faculty members. Of course, the "reasons" given for opposition are usually couched in impeccable academic criticism such as the program is "lowering standards" or we are "trying to be all things to all people."

For these and other reasons, programs fail. We simply cannot be certain how long they will endure. Needs change. People change. Goals change. So we must recognize that our favorite program is not guaranteed to last and that it certainly will falter if it cannot adjust to new conditions. (Most difficult of all is admitting that a program may have outlived its usefulness.) In general, a new program can expect to continue (1) if its benefits continue to be apparent to its clients, (2) if it does not unduly threaten other important subsystems in the college, (3) if it is capable of adapting to change, and (4) if it is responsive to feedback from clients and related subsystems.

Evaluation. In the process of setting goals and formulating a plan of action, the program planners should have agreed on the criteria by which the program is to be judged. Today, those criteria are likely to be based on preestablished performance objectives. And although these specific, measurable aims are indeed difficult to develop, they offer the best means of systematizing evaluation. Without some sort of performance standards, meaningful evaluation is nearly impossible. Furthermore, presenting evidence of having met criteria that influential decision makers perceive as inconsequential is an exercise in futility. Advocates of transactional evaluation emphasize that the criteria and the acceptable evidence must be agreed upon ahead of time. Finally, what is learned in the evaluation must be fed back into the system so that adjustments can be made in the program.

SUMMARY

While I have not had an opportunity to test this model as yet, one of my doctoral students conducted an analysis of four well-developed women's programs in Michigan community colleges (Costick, 1975). She employed the Havelock model in conducting a post hoc analysis of programming stages and strategies used by these programs. Through intensive interviewing and case analysis she found that each program moved through each stage, although they occasionally changed the order of the stages. In addition she found that the strategies suggested by Havelock were employed (but without awareness of his admonitions). Costick by inference attributed successful installation of these constituency programs to their systematic use of change strategies. Although our proposed Strategic Planning Model is not identical to Havelock's model (we advocate transactional processes more explicitly and extensively), there is sufficient similarity to suggest that development of constituency programs is likely to be enhanced by application of the model. If that is even partially true it will have made this endeavor worthwhile.

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